

Belper Urban District Council.

REPORT of the MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH For the Year 1896.

GENTLEMEN,

During the above period 197 deaths were registered. 108 males, 89 females. Of this number 46 took place in the Union Workhouse, 19 of these belonged to this district, and 27 to the other parishes of the Union. Taking the four quarters of the year seriatim the deaths have been as follows:—

				District.		Workhouse.	
				Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
First Quarter	...			19	22	12	4
Second	„	...	...	15	12	5	3
Third	„	...		17	20	12	3
Fourth	„	...	...	23	23	5	2
				74	77	34	12

The gross death rate is 17·9 per thousand of the estimated population.

The mean mortality is 13·7. The death rate for England and Wales, being I believe something like 17·1.

The population in 1891, was 10420. I estimate that it has now reached to something like 10953, which from the number of new houses built and inhabited during the time, should be rather under than over the mark.

The increase of the population for the year, is 180.

The number of deaths during 1895 was 219, with a gross death rate of 23·1, and a mean death rate of 20·0. So from some cause or other the number of deaths has vastly decreased and consequently the death rate has sensibly diminished.

The number of deaths ascribed to Zymotic or Preventable Diseases has been 16.

Measles	...	...	1 death.
Scarlet Fever	...	...	2 „
Typhoid Fever	...	...	1 „
Diarrhœa	...	...	10 „
Croup	...	...	1 „
Pyæmia	...	...	1 „

The Zymotic Death Rate I estimate to be 1·4 per thousand of the population.

During the year 1895 the number of deaths registered as having been caused by Zymotic Causes was 27, with a Zymotic Death Rate of 2·5.

No death included in this category took place in the Union Workhouse.

The number of Births during the year has been distributed as follows—

First Quarter	...	52 Males.	51 Females.
Second „	...	50 „	27 „
Third „	...	56 „	54 „
Fourth „	...	45 „	38 „
		203 Males.	174 Females

Total 377 Births. Against 358 last year.

The Birth Rate for the year is 34.4 per thousand of the estimated population.

During the Year I have received altogether 45 Notifications under the Compulsory Notification of Infectious Diseases Act, with one exception they have all been sent in by the Medical Attendant. They are as follows—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	34 cases.
Erysipelas	...	...	5 „
Membranous Croup	...	...	1 „
Typhoid Fever	...	...	2 „
Diphtheria	...	...	1 „
Puerperal Fever	...	...	2 „

Almost all these cases have been enquired into by me *personally*, and I have always been most ably seconded when necessary by your Inspector. Especially in the highly infectious type of disease *i e* Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, &c., &c. When he has been indefatigable in the distribution of disinfectants and the subsequent fumigation of infected premises.

SCARLET FEVER has been prevalent during a greater portion of the year, the only months we appear to have had perfect immunity from this disorder being June, July and August. No part of the district seems to have been particularly selected for the visitation of this malady, and no portion appears to have been particularly exempt. The disease was no doubt for the most part of a mild nature, as only two fatal cases have been reported.

DIPHTHERIA.—Only one case of this terrible disorder was reported, and this was I believe of a mild type, and was soon convalescent.

TYPHOID FEVER.—Two sporadic cases have been reported. The first case at Hopping Hill Terrace was fully reported to you at the time. Neither the Sanitary condition nor the water supply were above suspicion. The cause of the second case was said to be eating Oysters, presumably from a sewerage infected district, be that as it may, I was unable to find anything in the youth's dwelling-house or adjacent premises likely to cause the disease, and as he travelled to and fro to Matlock daily to his business, it is almost impossible to state with accuracy the fountain and origin of the complaint other than the Oyster eating theory above mentioned.

PUERPERAL FEVER.—The first case was as far as I could make out, neglect of ordinary cleanliness during and after labour by the woman in charge, together with general filthiness and squalor of the whole of the premises. The case ended fatally.

The second case was caused by the backing up of sewerage from a cesspool and flooding the basement, causing a fearful stench and consequent infection. I may say that in this instance it has been found most difficult to deal with the sewerage of this property, as the areas are below the level of the town drains, consequently it is obliged to flow into cesspools and the consequent perpetual danger to health.

DIARRHŒA has been as usual particularly fatal to children of tender age. The cause I fear is in a great number of instances not far to seek. Insanitary surroundings. Artificial feeding with improper food, filthy, dirty feeding bottles, the rubber tubes never half cleansed, and teeming with bacilli, to say nothing of the perpetual dosing of the infant with purgatives, it often is a marvellous thing to me not that so many of them die, but that so many of them live. Precisely the same remarks apply to convulsions which is so frequently caused by irritation of intestinal tract by improperly digested food.

SMALL POX—There has been no case during the year. I very much fear however, that the total neglect of vaccination will sooner or later bring us face to face with a terrible epidemic, and the probable loss of many lives. During my professional career of quarter of a century, I have seen a good deal of Small Pox, and have passed through several epidemics, and personal observation has fully convinced me of the value of vaccination as a preventative. I practice what I preach inasmuch as I have myself been vaccinated since infancy no less than five times, and I shall again submit to the operation, should the disease make its appearance. I do not say that vaccination will entirely prevent Small Pox, but I do say that good vaccination will rob the disease of its terrors. I trust that we are quite prepared to face the next outbreak. When it does come it will be like a “bolt from the blue.” I only want someone to be able to exercise entire authority at a moments notice; know where the tents are, and where to pitch them, and every other detail so that we may not be again subject to the delay, worry and annoyance of the summer of 1895.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE HOSPITAL.—I was hoping to be able to report that this scheme was *un fait accompli*; but for some reason or other which I am unable to explain, the whole business “hangs fire” in a truly marvellous fashion.

WATER SUPPLY.—I suppose that this is the last time I shall be in a position to complain of scarcity of water in any portion of the town. That the old intermittent supply turned off and on at the will of some irresponsible official is a thing of the past. And that all the old dip and draw wells, pumps and springs, and any other supply which comes from a suspicious source shall all be done away with.

SEWERAGE.—The disposal of the sewerage continues as I have before reported, and will do, so I presume until our neighbours lower down the river put “their house in order,” then I expect our turn will not be long before it comes.

In the month of February a man was discovered by the police conveying in a cart portions of the carcase of a beast, the condition of which he had his suspicions. I was called in to view the meat which was cut up and prepared for sale, I had no difficulty in condemning four quarters which were thin, dark coloured, sodden, moist and emitted a sickly odour. By a Magistrate’s order the lot was destroyed. At the following Petty Sessions after a most lengthy hearing the owner of the flesh was convicted.

Lodging-Houses, Bake-Houses, and Slaughter-Houses remain much as they did at my last report, and I have nothing further to add.

SCAVENGING has, I believe been fairly efficient; delay in emptying privys and middens will sometimes occur, but I believe on the whole it is satisfactory. The whole of it is done by the District Council at an annual cost of something like £254, or £22 10s. per thousand of the inhabitants.

I append the usual Tables,

And beg to remain, Gentlemen,


Yours most obediently and respectfully,

RICHARD G. ALLEN,

M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Belper, March, 1897.



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Summary of Sanitary Work done in the Inspector of Nuisances' Department during
the year 1896 in the Derbyshire portion of the

URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT OF BELPER.

				Inspections and Observations made.	Informal Notices served by Inspector.	Legal Notices by Authority.	Nuisances Abated after Notice.
Dwelling Houses and Schools.	{	Foul Conditions....	... ..	167	44	54	86
		Structural Defects	... ..			
		Overcrowding	... ..	10		10	9
		Unfit for Habitation	... ..	2		2	2
		Lodging Houses...	... ..	16			
		Bakehouses	... ..	9		1	
		Slaughter-houses	... ..	42		2	2
	{	Ashpits and Privies	... ..	95		62	60
		Deposits of Refuse and Manure	... ..			
		Water Closets	... ..	4		2	2
House Drainage	{	Defective Traps ...	... ..	78		45	39
		No Disconnection	... ..			
		Other Faults	... ..			
		Water Supply	... ..	4		4	1
		Animals improperly kept	... ..	6		6	6
TOTALS				433	44	188	207
				Nos.			
Samples of Water taken for Analysis ...				4			
" " condemned as unfit for use				4			
Houses Disinfected after Infectious Disease				6			

